

# The Simsbury Scoop



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## Ethel Walker Open Space Program completed

By Richard Sawitzke  
Consulting Engineer

First Selectman Lisa Heavner announced that Simsbury completed its long-range open space program to preserve 425 acres of the Ethel Walker School property. A state grant reimbursement of \$500,000 was recently received. This payment was the final installment of nearly \$2 million of state and federal grants.

The initial planning for protecting this environmentally sensitive land began in 2001, while Anita Mielert was First Selectman. During First Selectman Thomas Vincent's time in office, the town worked cooperatively with the Ethel Walker School, the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Keep the Woods, The Trust for Public Land, and town boards and commis-

sions to develop a long-range acquisition agreement which provided for grant applications and acquisitions over a 14-year period.

In June 2007, the first parcels were acquired: the 286 acres of land nearest the Stratton Brook aquifer, and the development rights for 49 acres of scenic land along Bushy Hill Road. The land was acquired through fundraising efforts of The Trust for Public Land, which was donated to the town. Funds were also raised by Keep the Woods, Ethel Walker alumnae and former trustees, Trout Unlimited and local residents. Simsbury residents also approved appropriations toward keeping the property as open space.

While Mary Glassman served as First Selectman, three additional grants were received from the state and the U.S. Department of the Interior to acquire an

additional 91 acres.

The environmentally valuable Ethel Walker property now serves as the cornerstone of over 1,400 contiguous acres of open space, recreation and agricultural land, with connectivity to an additional 5,200 acres of open space. These combined properties are among the largest open space areas in Connecticut.

Protection of these wonderful land assets was achieved through the long-term efforts of the town, the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, the Simsbury Land Trust, U.S. Dept. of Interior Highlands Act, Simsbury Coon Club, and McLean Game Refuge.

The Ethel Walker Open Space Program now provides public protection of valuable natural resources consisting of forest land, prime farmland soils, and primary aquifer areas.

Simsbury's principal water source, the Stratton Brook aquifer, lies within the western portion of the Ethel Walker Open Space. Its wells yield over 1.4 million gallons of water per day and supplies 70 percent of town drinking water.

As an "ecotone" site, where edges of woodlands, meadows, wetlands and streams abut each other, the property is an important habitat to many: over 350 species of wildlife, species of songbirds and woodland animals. Stratton Brook is an important trout fishery. The woods also offer a deep forest core, providing cool and unfragmented habitat that supports plants and animals rarely found so close to populated areas.

Crossed by miles of blazed trails, the property provides a unique setting for people to hike and enjoy the serene natural environment.

## Ethel Walker Open Space Program acquisition summary

Parcel	Size (Ac)	Purchase \$	Grant \$	Net Cost \$	Closing Date
Fee Simple A1+	285.95	7,000,000	716,175	6,283,825	June 26, 2007
Devel. Rights A2*	49.10	0	0	0	June 26, 2007
B & C option deposit	0	1,000,000		1,000,000	
Fee Simple B	49.85	2,000,000	691,666	1,308,334	April 24, 2013
Fee Simple C	41.81	1,100,000	500,000	600,000	Dec. 2014
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>426.71</b>	<b>11,100,000</b>	<b>1,907,841</b>	<b>9,192,159</b>	

+Parcel A1 includes 3 approved building lots (Longview Dr., Woodhaven, Banks Rd.)

\*Conservation Easement — Donated to town by The Trust for Public Land, through additional fundraising from Keep the Woods, Ethel Walker alumnae and former trustees, and local residents.

## Learn the art of food presentation with Millwright's Tyler Anderson, Aug. 11

The visual sensation of a dish is almost as important as its flavor – some say that people eat with their eyes first.

Bring your eyes and your appetite as you learn some basic rules of food presentation and learn to add your own creativity from award-winning

local chef Tyler Anderson. Sample some beautifully presented hors d'oeuvres from Millwright's Restaurant.

Tyler Anderson, a James Beard Foundation "Best Chef Northeast" Semi-Finalist

and 2014 Connecticut Restaurant Association Chef of the Year, cooks "from the ground up" at his local restaurant, Mill-

wright's. His menu is inspired by locally grown products and old New England techniques. A California native, Anderson has created his food in award-winning restaurants throughout the country. Anderson is also known

for winning the Food Network's "Chopped" and most recently appeared on Food Network's "Beat Bobby Flay".

According to a recent Connecticut Magazine article, "The New York Times has

**This program will be held on Tuesday, August 11, 2015 from 2 to 3:30 p.m. at the Simsbury Public Library, 725 Hopmeadow Street. Reserve a seat at 860-658-7663 x2200 or [click here](#). Free and open to all.**



BSC Photo

rhapsodized that the inspired New England cuisine of Chef Tyler Anderson 'both dazzles and delights,' and the esteemed James Beard Foundation credits Anderson with 'prodigious talent and imaginative vision.'

## Back to School Program offers help for Simsbury families

The Simsbury Social Services Department is once again offering its **Back To School Program** for Simsbury families. Eligible families will receive a Walmart gift certificate to purchase school clothes or school sup-

plies for their children. To be eligible, families must be enrolled in a Social Service program (state or local). For further information or to set an appointment, please call the Social Services Department at 860-658-3283.



**Reminder: The First Day of School is Wednesday, August 26.**



### Election filing info, dates

**August 5, 2015** — last day to file nominating petition with the Simsbury Town Clerk, by 4 p.m.

**August 12, 2015** — last day to file primary petition with the Simsbury Registrars of Voters, by 4 p.m.



### Farmers' Market

The Simsbury Farmers' Market runs every Thursday through September 10, 2015 from 3 to 6 p.m. on the Green at Simsmore Square, 540 Hopmeadow Street, [www.simsburyfarmersmarket.com](http://www.simsburyfarmersmarket.com).



## The Silverman Group signs agreement to acquire The Hartford's Simsbury campus

*Preliminary development plan calls for mixed-use of commercial, residential*

[The Silverman Group](#), a private, family-owned real estate development firm, signed a purchase-and-sale agreement to acquire The Hartford's property at 200 Hopmeadow Street. The deal is expected to close in the fourth quarter of 2015, subject to due diligence and customary closing conditions. Terms of the agreement were not disclosed.

"We have worked for a year to acquire this property and are excited to become a part of Simsbury's growth and future

development," said Blake Silverman, President. "We consider the property to be a tremendous redevelopment opportunity for our company and the town of Simsbury as well as the greater Hartford area."

The purchase-and-sale agreement includes a total of 172 acres, including the office area and farmland north of the office. The Silverman Group plans to implement components of the Form Based Code that was adopted by the town of Simsbury for the property and plans a state-of-the-art mixed-use redevelopment of The Hartford's Simsbury campus. The proposed development includes both commercial and residential components.

**Information provided by The Silverman Group**

## New bike law in Connecticut effective July 1, 2015

The Bicycle Safety bill, Senate Bill 502 and now [Public Act 15-41](#), was passed in May with broad bipartisan support. Gov. Dannel P. Malloy signed the bill into law on June 1.

The new law eliminates the rule requiring cyclists to ride as far to the right as practicable.

Instead, the law now requires cyclists to ride as close to the right side of the road as is safe, as judged by the cyclist.

As of July 1, cyclists don't have to ride as close to the right side of the road when:

- Overtaking or passing another vehicle proceeding in the same direction;
- Preparing for a left turn at an intersection or into a private road or driveway;
- Reasonably necessary to avoid conditions, including, but not limited to, fixed or moving objects, parked or

moving vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, animals, surface hazards or lanes that are too narrow for a bicycle and a motor vehicle to travel safely side by side within such lanes;

- Approaching an intersection where right turns are permitted and there is a dedicated right turn lane, in which case a bicyclist may ride on the left-hand side of such dedicated lane, even if the bicyclist does not intend to turn right;
- Riding on a roadway designated for

one-way traffic, when the bicyclist may ride as near to the left-hand curb or edge of such roadway as judged safe by the bicyclist;

- Riding on parts of roadways separated for the exclusive use of bicycles, including, but not limited to, contra-flow bicycle lanes, left-handed cycle tracks or bicycle lanes on one-way streets and two-way cycle tracks or bicycle lanes.

The new law also allows two-way bicycle lanes, buffered bike lanes, and cycle tracks to be designed in Connecticut and allows drivers to cross the double yellow line to pass slower-

moving cyclists and other road users when it's safe to do so. (Info [Cyclesnack](#))



## Exploring dinosaur sites and the roots of dinosaur science in Connecticut at the library

Presented by natural history guide publisher Brendan Hanrahan and enlivened with seldom seen images and video. Hanrahan will describe how the Connecticut valley is a place where fossil fans can discover how early paleontologists first imagined an ancient past filled with strange beasts, and how local scientists have made important contri-

butions to the knowledge of dinosaurs ever since. Modern theories about the dinosaur-bird connection, dinosaur habitats, and dinosaur behavior are all easily explored here. While you're at the library, take a look at the Simsbury Historical Society dinosaur exhibit in the display case on the upper level.

This program, appropriate for adults and older children or teens, will be held on Thursday, August 6 from 7 to 8 p.m. Reserve a seat at 860-658-7663 x2200 or [click here](#). Free and open to all.



Photo by Brendan Hanrahan